



City of Fitchburg Massachusetts 01420

CITY COUNCIL

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Marcus L. DiNatale
Samantha M. Squailia
Anthony M. Zarrella
E. Thomas Donnelly**

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Michael P. Kushmerek

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Ward Councilors

**Ward 1 – Amy L. Green
Ward 2 – Paul R. Beauchemin
Ward 3 – Joel R. Kaddy
Ward 4 – Michael P. Kushmerek
Ward 5 – Marisa R. Fleming
Ward 6 – Elizabeth R. Walsh**

Finance Committee

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chairman DiNatale on Tuesday, April 24, 2018 at 6:05 PM in the Memorial Middle School Library, 615 Rollstone Street, Fitchburg, MA.

Committee Members present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Marcus DiNatale, Michael Kushmerek, Elizabeth Walsh, and Anthony Zarrella.

Other Councilors present: Councilors David Clark, and Samantha Squailia. Councilor E. Thomas Donnelly arrived late.

Others present: City Auditor Calvin Brooks, Human Resources Director Susan Davis, Police Chief Ernest Martineau, Police Captain Harry Hess, City Solicitor Vincent Pusateri.

107-18 ORDER: that there be and hereby is appropriated the sum of NINETY-ONE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED NINETY-TWO DOLLARS (\$91,592.00), same to be charged against AVAILABLE FUNDS and credited to accounts as follows:

Police / Dispatch – Personal Services	\$79,431
Police / Dispatch – Overtime	\$ 9,000
Treasurer – Personal Services	\$ 3,161

108-18 ORDER: that there be and hereby is transferred the sum of SEVEN THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT DOLLARS (\$7,568.00) from Airport Expenses, Aviation Fuel and credited to Airport, Personal Services.

Discussion: Chief Ernest Martineau and Human Resources Director Susan Davis spoke on Order #107-18 and Order #108-18. They, along with City Solicitor Vincent Pusateri, represented the city in contract negotiations with the Teamsters, who represent dispatchers, parking control

officer, and airport linemen. The negotiations went on for several months and came to an amicable conclusion. The settlement brought the dispatchers to a pay scale in line with other communities, such as Gardner and Leominster, and will aid in retention of employees. The COLA for the contract is 0%, 1%, and 1%.

Councilors asked if there had been a realignment of steps as in the Local 39 (DPW) contract and were answered in the affirmative. The steps are similar to the previous contract, but the rates had been changed. The hourly rate for the first step was increased from \$16.02 to \$18.56. The additional cost of the three years of the contract is approximately \$329,000, with the first year coming from available funds. Subsequent years will be included in the budget.

A discussion followed about the vacation benefit, especially for new hires, and the possibility of regionalizing the dispatch function. The chief explained that he has explored a regional dispatch a couple of times since he became chief, but found that an in-house service was better than in a regional setting. When asked if limited duty officers could cover in dispatch, the chief stated that, because there are two bargaining units, that option is not available, except in an emergency.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

109-18 ORDER: that there be and hereby is transferred from within the sum of TWENTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$20,000.00) same to be transferred from POLICE, PERSONAL SERVICES, INCENTIVES and credited to POLICE, OTHER EXPENSES, ANIMAL CONTROL.

Discussion: Chief Martineau reminded the committee that in November, the city privatized animal control. Because there was an overlap between the former animal control officer and the current vendor, he knew there would be a shortage in the animal control expense account and had so reported to the committee at that time. He feels comfortable that the \$20,000 requested will cover the excess costs.

Councilors expressed appreciation that the chief was consistent in his message between last November and now. They asked how the current vendor is working. The chief replied that services are very good. When the service was in-house, costs were approximately \$136,000, including salary, overtime, kenneling, veterinary services, vehicle maintenance, and employee benefits. The current contract is \$105,000 with veterinary services extra.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

110-18 ORDER: that the City of Fitchburg hereby approves the expenditure of funds from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Mental Health grant in the approximate amount of \$49,365.00 (FORTY-NINE THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purpose of said grant, which is to support a police based Jail Diversion Program for individuals with Mental Illnesses or emotional disturbances.

Discussion: Chief Martineau and Captain Harry Hess reported that the city is in the seventh year of this program and this grant will enable the city to continue to engage in outreach to citizens who have had mental health crises and to train personnel in handling mental health issues. Some of the training is conducted by Fitchburg State University. The chief stated that Fitchburg is on the cutting edges of providing these services to its citizens.

Councilors asked how prevalent the problem is. Captain Hess indicated that there are one to two calls per day where the police are trying to connect people in crisis with services. The Chief said he is starting to reap the benefits of having a fully trained department. This program is different from the program run through the Sheriff's department, which focuses more on substance abuse.

Action: Be adopted (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 6:360 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Calvin D. Brooks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cal" being particularly prominent.

Calvin D. Brooks, Clerk